

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- A
- 1 1. A method for directory assistance in response to a call from  
2 a caller, the method comprising:  
3 receiving the call;  
4 determining if the call is a request for directory assistance and, if not,  
5 routing the call as dialed;  
6 if the call is a request for directory assistance, routing the call to a  
7 speech recognizer;  
8 determining the type of directory assistance requested;  
9 if the caller is not requesting business directory assistance, routing  
10 the call to a call center;  
11 if the caller is requesting business directory assistance, automatically  
12 determining at least one telephone number satisfying the caller request.
  - 1 2. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein the  
2 caller requests business information by business name.
  - 1 3. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein the  
2 caller requests business information by business category.
  - 1 4. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein  
2 determining at least one telephone number is based on the location of the caller.
  - 1 5. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 further  
2 comprising:  
3 querying the caller for automatic connection; and  
4 if the caller requests automatic connection, routing the call to a  
5 selected connection number.
  - 1 6. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 further  
2 comprising:

A

3 determining that the caller is having problems automatically obtaining  
4 business directory assistance; and  
5 routing the call to a call center.

1 7. A method for directory assistance as in claim 6 further  
2 comprising supplying the call center with information about caller activity.

1 8. A method for directory assistance as in claim 1 wherein  
2 determining if the call is a request for directory assistance is based on a dialing  
3 pattern entered by the caller.

1 9. A method for directory assistance wherein a call for directory  
2 assistance is routed to a speech recognizer to determine the type of assistance  
3 requested and, if the request is for business information, automatically retrieving  
4 requested business directory assistance information, otherwise routing the call to a  
5 call center.

1 10. A system for directory assistance comprising:  
2 at least one switch for routing incoming calls, the switch determining  
3 if an incoming call is a request for directory assistance;  
4 a database holding business directory information;  
5 at least one call center; and  
6 a speech recognizer in communication with the at least one switch,  
7 the database and the at least one call center, the speech recognizer determining if the  
8 request for directory assistance is for business information and, if so, accessing the  
9 database to satisfy the request, otherwise routing the call to the call center.

1 11. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the  
2 speech recognizer satisfies the request based on receiving a business name.

1 12. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the  
2 speech recognizer satisfies the request based on receiving a business category.

A  
1 13. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the  
2 speech recognizer satisfies the request based on location of a caller placing the  
3 request.

1 14. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the  
2 speech recognizer queries a caller placing the request to connect to a number  
3 satisfying the request.

1 15. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein the  
2 speech recognizer routes a caller placing the request to a call center if the caller is  
3 experiencing a problem.

1 16. A system for directory assistance as in claim 15 wherein the  
2 speech recognizer sends information about caller activity to the call center.

1 17. A system for directory assistance as in claim 10 wherein  
2 determining if an incoming call is a request for directory assistance is based on a  
3 dialing pattern entered by a caller.

1 18. A speech recognizer for use in servicing a call requesting  
2 directory assistance, the speech recognizer providing at least one number in  
3 response to a request for business directory assistance and routing the call to a call  
4 center otherwise.